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OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

MEMORANDUM

ATTORNEY GENERAL

November 14, 1980

TO File

FROM Reed Neuman

SUBJECT Dead Creek: Charlie Meininger, former supervisor at  
Midwest Rubber Reclaiming Company

1/12/80                      Tonight I spoke with Charlie Meininger, of Forsythe,  
:30 p.m. Missouri (phone: 417/546-5820), a former employee of the  
Midwest Rubber Reclaiming Company in Sauget. His name had  
been mentioned to me as being someone who worked and lived  
in the area for a long time and thus would be a good source  
of information about Dead Creek.

Mr. Meininger started to work for Midwest Rubber  
back in 1930 and retired in January of 1971. He started  
off as a laborer for Midwest, moving up later to the position  
of Laboratory Technician, which he held for ten or twelve  
years, then was transferred into the factory itself as an  
Assistant Superintendent, later to become Superintendent.  
His duties also included scheduling of production.

I asked him to briefly describe Midwest Rubber's  
processes and operation. He said their business involves  
mostly the recycling of automobile tires and other rubber  
products, to put them back in a form usable as raw materials  
by other industries. The process begins by putting the used  
tires through a mill, consisting of two large corrugated  
steel rolls, which grind up the rubber, and any metal attached  
thereto, which is later removed by magnets. The ground materials

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are then sifted through screens, the larger chunks going back into the mill, and the smaller parts going into a processor. The ground up material is processed in a large container which is steam-heated, also employing some oil. The material is cooked for approximately twelve hours, then spray washed with water, and then dried. The end product is rolled onto spools, and cut into slab sections.

I asked him what was done with the spent oil or process liquids used in this operation. He said for the last twenty years or so, those wastes have been pumped directly into the Village of Monsanto/Sauget sewer system. Prior to that, however, Midwest Rubber had a sewer line running from its plant to Dead Creek, discharging all its process wastes directly to the Creek. I asked him what kind of materials these were, and he said there were some oils and some rubber residue in the discharge, but mostly it was a fibrous residue, a byproduct of the production. This fibrous residue usually was digested either by a caustic (alkali) or with zinc (acid). He said this material, when dried, formed what was called "mud", because of its spongy characteristics. This material settled in the creek bed, although he told me that it was "not enough to cause anybody any problems". Apparently this "mud" had some value, because Midwest Rubber tried to retain some of it at the plant, and resell it for use by other industries. He said the sewer ran underground under Route 3 and along Queeny Avenue, then partially running above ground (on stilts) over to Dead Creek.

I asked him if he knew of any other industries having similar outlets to the creek. He did not know of any others but suggested that perhaps Lewin and Monsanto, slightly upstream, would have had similar discharges. He was "certain" that Darling Fertilizer did not have a pipe running to the creek nor did the

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Phillips Petroleum plant, south of Midwest Rubber, on Route 3. He believed that Monsanto's wastes in large part went through their own sewer system directly to the Mississippi River.

I asked him whether Midwest Rubber disposed of any solid wastes, and where. He said the plant started in 1928, and that at least since he started there in 1930, he cannot recall anything being disposed of in landfills. Their business was recycling, and even metals and other waste materials were bundled and resold to other industries if possible. Midwest Rubber also used to burn some of their waste rubber products at the plant, but had to stop when complaints were received about the black smoke created by the burning.

As far back as he can remember, the Creek has always been basically dry, having flow in it only during times of wet weather. Thus, the flows into the Creek from industries would settle right in the Creek area near the outlet pipe, to be flushed downstream only in times of heavy rains. Again, however, he wanted to emphasize that the stuff being put in the Creek by Midwest Rubber was not enough to cause anybody harm, in his words.

I asked him about the cutthrough from Dead Creek to the pond next to the Florist Shop. He remembers the excavation work being done to create the pond, but has no knowledge of how the cutthrough was created.

He emphasized that he did not want to say anything to get Midwest Rubber into trouble, but that he was trying to be honest with his answers. He suggested that I talk to Mr. Carl

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Totsch, the current president of Midwest Rubber, for any more information that I might need. Mr. Totsch apparently has been working there since around 1945.

(I should have asked him for the name of Midwest Rubber's Chief Engineer or Superintendent responsible for sewers, plumbing, etc. to find out more about the existence of the sewer line. I will try to do this soon.)

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